

ECHO IRELAND

Journal of the
Irish Radio Transmitters Society
July/August 2005

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The views expressed in Echo Ireland do
not necessarily represent the views of the
Society or the Editor

**Deadline for next edition
September 30th**

**Cork Rally
September 25th 2005
Blarney Park Hotel**

**Waterford Rally
16th of October 2005
McEniff Ard Ri Hotel.**

**Mayo Rally
November 20th 2005
Belmont Hotel, Knock.**

**2006 Limerick Rally
Sunday 12th March 2006
Greenhills Hotel**

**IRTS AGM 2006
Cork
April 22/23rd 2006**



IRTS Presidents Cup 2005

IRTS President Sean Donelan EI4GK and Honorary Vice President Sean Nolan EI7CD recently visited the shack of Frank O'Brien EI2GS to formally present the President's Cup for 2004. This trophy was awarded to Frank to mark his achievement in working all 335 entities on the DXCC list.

Pictured L to R: IRTS President Sean EI4GK, Frank EI2GS and IRTS Hon. Vice-President Sean EI7CD

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9 Series Calls:	Mark Condon EI6JK		<i>ei6jk@ntlworld.ie</i>

News Bulletins and Readers

Sunday				
Dublin	1100	7.043	SSB	Colm EI3H, Sean EI7CD, Gerry EI8CC
Wicklow	1130	3.680	SSB (as Gaeilge)	Paddy EI7GK
Dublin	1145	145.525	FM	Sean EI5GH, Brendan EI8IB
Dublin	1200	3.650	SSB	As 1100
Tipperary	2030	145.450	FM	Tommy EI7IT, John EI2JB
Dublin	2130	145.525	FM	As 1145
Monday				
Cork	2000	145.750	FM	Con EI7DJB, Vincent EI7HN
Limerick	2000	145.725	FM	Brian EI9AL, Tony EI2AW
Louth	2000	145.675		Peter EI4HX, Thos EI2JD
Galway	2000	145.625		Aengus EI4ABB, Richard EI5GC
Tuesday				
Waterford	2130	145.650	FM	John EI8JA, Robbie EI8FZB

IRTS Committee Members 2005/06

President Sean Donelan EI4GK
V/President Fr. Finbarr Buckley EI1CS

Paul Martin EI2CA
John Ketch EI2GN
Pat Fitzpatrick EI2HX
Noel Walsh EI2JC
Brendan De hÓra EI3GV
Joe Fadden EI3IX
Peter Grant EI4HX
Paul O' Kane EI5DI
Sean Nolan EI7CD
Brian Canning EI8IU
Pat O' Connor EI9HX

Club Representatives

Dave Moore EI4BZ (East Cork Group)
Stephen O' Leary EI6JA (Cork Radio Club)
Mark Condon EI6JK (South Dublin R.C.)

Clubs are encouraged to send observers to committee meetings. Clubs with fifteen IRTS members can nominate a club representative who has full voting rights on the committee.

Dubus Magazine

IRTS has been appointed as the Irish distributor for the DUBUS Magazine, a quarterly magazine for VHF, UHF and Microwave enthusiasts.

This is a publication that no serious VHF/UHF/Microwave DXer should be without.

It carries all the latest news of happenings on the higher bands. It is a technical magazine and covers material that cannot be readily found anywhere else. It is published quarterly and the last issue had 116 A5 pages.

It is mailed directly to subscribers from the publishers in Germany.

The annual subscription is €22.00 and should be forwarded to:

Dave Moore, EI4BZ,
Dooneen,
Carrigtwohill,
Co. Cork.

Silent Key James Walsh EI6IS

James Walsh EI6IS of Clontarf, Dublin died recently. James suffered a serious stroke a few weeks before his death and unfortunately did not recover.

James was the father of Ivor Walsh EI7DUB who was well known in amateur circles in Dublin and who was tragically killed in a traffic accident in Dublin some years back.

James is survived by his wife Kitty and brothers and sisters to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.
May he rest in peace.

Silent Key Martin O'Dea EI3FI

It is with deep regret we learned of the death of Martin O'Dea EI3FI in late July.

While not in the best of health for some time, Martin maintained a keen interest in the hobby and was very active in the satellite field.

Martin served as secretary of IRTS and was an active contributor to the IRTS Newsletter.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife children



From the Editor.....

Welcome to another edition of Echo Ireland, delayed slightly by holidays etc.

Local news has been hard to find but I am sure now that we are heading into the short nights and club re-openings we will be deluged with material for the next issue.

Photographs are always needed and with almost everyone now using digital cameras, we should have no problems in that area.

We now have broadband so don't worry about the bandwidth!

Thanks to all who contributed this time and we look forward to many more contributors over the coming months.

Don't forget the radio news.

Mark EI7IS has a weekly struggle to get a script together and he really needs your help.

73 de EI4BZ

IRTS Subscriptions to increase from 1st January 2006

At a recent Committee meeting the Society's financial position was reviewed in the light of the increasing inflationary pressures obvious for some time. Having shown a surplus for a number of years, the IRTS Accounts went into deficit in 2004 and indications are that the deficit in 2005 will reach an even higher level.

There was an understandable reluctance among the Committee members to take a decision on higher subscriptions but following a lengthy discussion it was agreed that subscriptions should be increased with effect from 1st January 2006. The new rates applicable from that date will be:

Members resident in EI

Licensed Members	€30.00
Shortwave Listeners	€25.00
Clubs/Societies	€30.00
Family Membership	€45.00
Students/Unemployed	€20.00
OAPs with 15 years continuous membership	€20.00

Members resident outside EI

All categories	€30.00
	£20.00
	\$40.00

To soften the impact of the increases, the Committee made three further decisions:

- (1) Members who choose to pay their 2006 subscriptions before the end of 2005 may do so at the old rates.
- (2) Members who pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit will be charged their 2006 subscriptions at the old rates, and
- (3) Members who sign up before the end of 2005 to pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit will be charged their 2006 subscriptions at the old rates.

The use of Direct Debits has considerable advantages for the Society. Not only is the Treasurer saved the work and expense of issuing reminders but the Bank Charges involved are much lower. Members using the Direct Debit system also make savings in stamps, stationery and the sheer hassle involved in ensuring the payment is made.

In an effort to encourage the use of the Direct Debit system, a Direct Debit Mandate Form is enclosed with this issue of Echo Ireland. Please consider using this method of paying your annual subscription. Remember you are not only making life easier for yourself over the long term but your 2006 subscription will be at the old rate.

Unfortunately, only those with bank accounts in the Republic of Ireland can avail of the direct debit system.

Nuacht as Gaeilge.

Tá an Nuacht as Gaeilge aistraithe go 3.680MHz ar 80m ón 14ú Lúnasa 2005. Éist gach Dómhnaigh ag 11.30h am aitiúil.

The IRTS news in Irish has changed frequency due to bad conditions on 40m. From now on the news in Irish will be read on 3.680 MHz at 1130 on 80 metres.

Paddy EI7GK, who reads the news as Gaeilge hopes that all the regulars will be able to call in on 80m.

New callers are always welcome, regardless of your level of Irish.

Beidh fáilte rómhat.

Simple Radio PTT To Computer Interface Circuits

SSTV, PSK31, RTTY, CW, EchoLink, eQSO etc.

By Peter EI4JR

Digital communication modes represent one of the fastest growing areas of interest in amateur radio, with the past decade seeing many developments. Over the past few years data modes like SSTV and PSK31 have become popular.

In digital transmissions such as SSTV, PSK31 or even RTTY, the ability of your own computer and radio to send and receive various digital modes is a real plus.

An interface unit allows one to transmit and receive these modes without the expense of purchasing a separate TNC or DSP device. A regular sound card, as found in most of today's computers, can easily handle DSP functions. Conveniently, these interfaces are designed to operate without an external power supply.

There are various circuits to enable you to build your own interface. I have included here some simple designs that I have built, tested and which work very well considering their simplicity and economy. These circuits will also perform well if you intend to run an Internet gateway using eQSO or EchoLink software. Software for these modes is freely available via the Internet, especially on the links page of www.ei4jr.com !

Other PTT techniques make use the vox for PTT - but don't forget to disconnect it or the inevitable Microsoft beep or late night mp3 might create a surprise or two. It is best to avoid VOX switching but Many new PCs have no RS232 either so I think we are soon going to have to find another way to drive our radios.

Digital modes can have a long transmitter duty cycle .Try to keep your output power to 10 - 20 % of the max rated power. Disable all the rig compressors, DSP noise reduction etc.

Isolated Interface

Circuit 1 incorporates two 600-ohm audio transformers (T1&T2) and an RS232 powered optocoupler IC1. Preferably use an IC socket for IC1, for possible quick replacement!

The purpose of the transformers and an optocoupler is to isolate the transceiver from the computer, keeping the interference from the PC to a minimum. Ensure that the screening on the radio and the screening on the PC are not connected together.

Stereo 3.5 mm plugs connect the line in and out on the computer soundcard. Use the tip and earth only as in this application the sleeve is not used.

- To control the radio PTT an isolated signal from the computers RS232 RTS line is used.
- If you have an available DB9 connector on your computer, use RTS, which is Pin 7 and ground, which is Pin 5.
- If you have a DB25 connector on your computer, use RTS, which is Pin 4 and ground, which is pin 7.

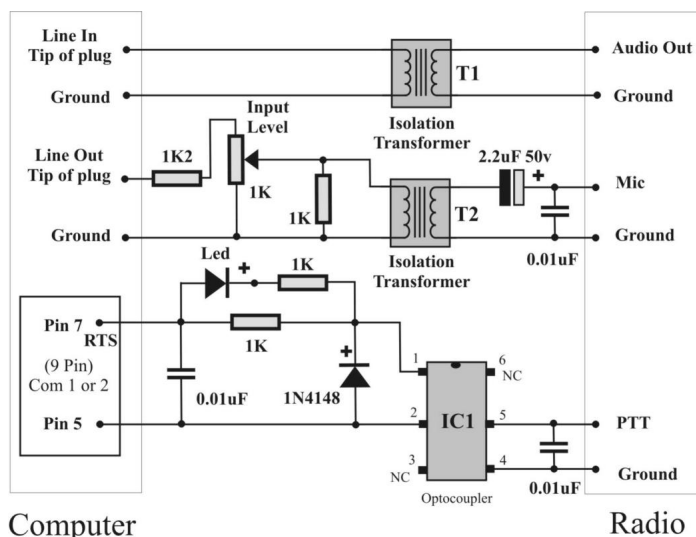
VR1 is a 1K linear potentiometer used to control the amount of

audio going to the mic and is adjusted for correct audio drive to the radio, usually converting line (0.5v) to mic (10mV) levels. The 1.2k resistor (from the line in) can be changed to a greater value if you are troubled by the pot always being at the bottom or top of the range or alternately by adjusting computers audio out slider till the correct level is achieved.

Operationally, audio levels are adjusted by the computer level controls or are incorporated in the software you will be using.

The LED (high sensitivity type) is used as an indicator when the interface is in the transmit mode.

It is suggested that the finished interface is put in a metal box and that the grounding is taken from the radio side of the circuit.



Computer

Radio

Circuit 1

Components for Circuit 1

- 3 x 1k ¼ watt resistors - 1 x 1.2k ¼ watt resistors
- 1 x 1k Potentiometer lin - 1 x 2.2uF 50v capacitor - 3 x 0.01uF capacitors
- 2 x (T1 & T2) 600 ohm transformers type 9000 RS Number 208-822
- 1 x IC1 optocoupler 4N25 RS Number 597-289
- 1 x Red LED (High sensitivity type) - 1 x Diode 1N4148 - 2 x 3.5mm Stereo plugs
- 1 x 9 Pin D plug (Com port 1 or 2) & cover
- Screened cable - Project Box

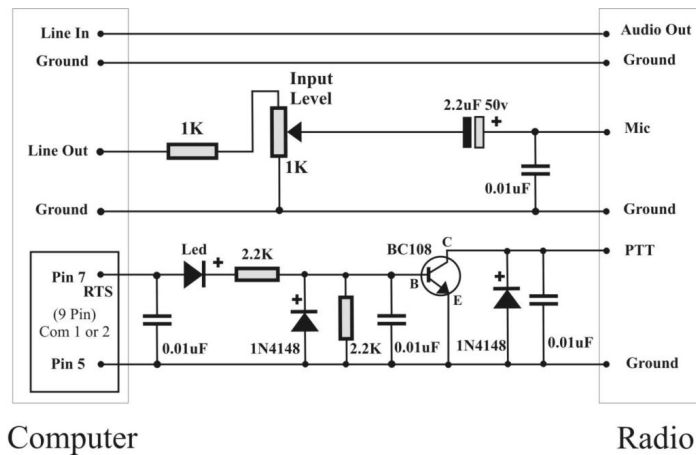
Simple Interface

This circuit is very similar to Circuit 1 except it does not use audio transformers or the optocoupler, but performs splendidly.

In this circuit RTS drives an open collector for the PTT.

You can use any general NPN transistor instead of a BC108.

(Continued from page 4)



Circuit 2

Components for Circuit 2

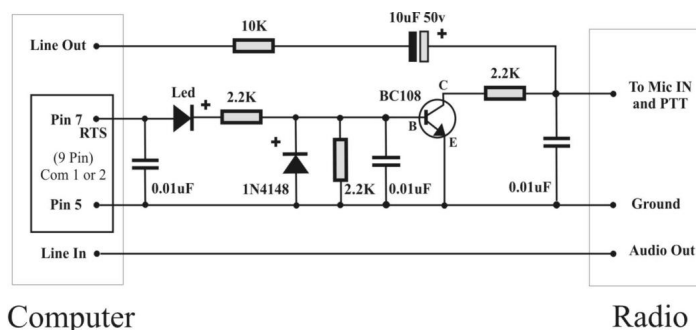
1 x 1k ¼ watt resistors - 2 x 2.2k ¼ watt resistors
 1 x 1k Potentiometer Lin - 1 x 2.2uF 50v capacitor - 4 x 0.01uF capacitors
 1 x Red LED (High sensitivity type) - 2 x Diode 1N4148 - 2 x 3.5mm Stereo plugs
 1 x BC108 Transistor - 1 x 9 Pin D plug (Com port 1 or 2) & cover
 Screened cable - Project Box

Simple Interface for Handheld Radios

A handheld's mic and PTT are normally combined, hence circuit 3 was designed and works admirably.

Audio levels can only be adjusted by the computer's level control.

Stereo 3.5 mm plugs connect the line in and out on the computer soundcard. Use the tip and earth only as, in this application, the sleeve is not used.



Circuit 3

Components for Circuit 3

3 x 2.2k ¼ watt resistors - 1 x 10k ¼ watt resistor - 1 x 10uF 50v capacitor
 1 x 2.2uF 50v capacitor - 3 x 0.01uF capacitors - 1 x Red LED - 1 x Diode 1N4148 2 x 3.5mm Stereo plugs - 1 x BC108 Transistor
 1 x 9 Pin D plug (Com port 1 or 2) & cover
 Screened Cable - Project Box

All the components can be obtained from Mode Components.

Peter EI4JR web site www.ei4jr.com

EchoLink web site www.echolink.org

eQSO web site www.eqso.org

Mode Components web site www.modecomponents.co.uk

Glossary

DB9	9 pin connector (Found on computer COM ports)
DSP	Digital Signal Processing
Echo Link	Internet radio linking software
EQSO	Internet conference by radio software
PSK31	Phase Shift Key 31
RTS	Ready to Send
RTTY	Radio Teletype
SSTV	Slow Scan Television
TNC	Terminal Node Controller

FCC propose abolishing Morse testing in the U.S.A.

The FCC is proposing to eliminate Morse code testing as a requirement for any class of US amateur license. In a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) adopted July 15 and issued today, the FCC said that comments already received indicated that the majority of amateurs support eliminating the code test for the General Class license and says that maintaining code exams for Extra Class "would not be in the public interest." The Commission declined to propose any additional changes suggested in any of the 18 petitions received after the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) dropped the international requirement for Morse code proficiency as a condition of issuing ham licenses with privileges below 30 MHz.

The NPRM is WT Docket 05-235. Comments may be filed for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register (which hasn't happened yet), with an additional 15 days for reply comments. We urge anyone planning to comment to read the entire Notice before commenting.

The complete 30-page document is available in Adobe Acrobat format at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-05-143A1.pdf.

The NPRM may also be downloaded in Word and text formats by substituting .doc or .txt for .pdf in the above address.

2m Repeater on The Ridge Of Capard

The EI2WRC voice repeater on The Ridge of Capard recently underwent some improvements to its performance. Reports can be sent to "repeaters at searg dot com".

Note: When using IRLP on the Southern Ireland Repeater Network, please state your callsign before dialling IRLP nodes.

Also, at the start of each over, keep the microphone keyed for one or two seconds to allow all the repeaters in the network and the contacted node to come on-line.

This prevents the start of your over from being cut off.

Consultation Paper

Review of fees applicable to Rights of Use for Radio Frequencies

Document No: 05/58
Date: July 28th 2005

All responses to this consultation should be clearly marked:-
“Reference: Submission re ComReg 05/58” as indicated above, and sent by post, facsimile, e-mail or on-line at www.comreg.ie (current consultations), to arrive on or before 5.00 pm on 9 September, to:

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Dublin 1, Ireland
Ph: +353-1-8049600 Fax: +353-1-804 9680
Email: marketframeworkconsult@comreg.ie

Please note ComReg will publish all respondents submissions with the Response to this Consultation, subject to the provisions of ComReg’s guidelines on the treatment of confidential information – ComReg 05/24

This is an extract from the document 05/58 covering references to experimenters licences.

5.6 Experimenters

Experimenter licences are issued to Individuals, Clubs and Repeater groups for the purpose of establishing a station and conducting experiments.

On issuing an Experimenters’ Licence, ComReg also issues an associated call-sign number.

On occasions, ComReg also receive requests for special event stations to be established with a special event call-sign.

Currently experimenters’ licences are annually renewable and cost €12 on issue and €10 per annum thereafter.

Spectrum management is minimal in the primary bands and licensing is mainly an administrative function.

In order to reduce the current administrative burden on ComReg and licensees, ComReg proposes a lifetime licence.

Proposal

Existing Experimenters’ radio licences will be amended to a lifetime licence, at the time of next renewal, for a fee of €30.

This fee will extend to all experimenters’ Licences including Repeater Licences.

All new Experimenters’ radio licences, including Repeater Licences, will be lifetime licences and subject to a once-off fee of €100.

Upon notification to ComReg and a payment of €30, Experimenters may make use of the extension bands and modes of emissions as outlined in the Experimenter’s handbook.

The use of these extensions is on a non-protected, non-interference basis.

From time to time, ComReg may modify an extension

band(s), and in these cases, experimenters may be required to stop using that extension band(s).

Licensees found using an extension band or a mode of emission without a valid notification will have their Licence revoked.

In order for a Licensee to maintain their lifetime Experimenters’ radio licence, the Licensee must confirm their licence details with ComReg every 5 years. Failure to do so will result in the expiry of the licence. The aim of this proposal is to ensure that ComReg maintains an accurate database of active Experimenters’ radio licences.

Upgrading of an Experimenters’ licence, e.g. from Class 2 to Class 1, and the establishment of special event stations shall be subject to a fee of €30.

Short-term Experimenter Licences issued to visitors shall be subject to a once-off fee of €30.

The maximum duration on these licences is 3 months.

Question 23. What are your views on the proposed licensing scheme for Experimenters’ radio licences and associated fees?

Question 24. What are your views on the 3 month maximum duration of a short-term Experimenters’ licence issued to visitors?

Question 25. Are there any alternative approaches that you think should be considered?

6.5 Experimenters

Typical amateur radio licence fees in Europe range from €16 to €54 per year.

A number of countries around the World, including Japan and New Zealand now issue amateur radio licences for life and the UK has recently announced a proposal for

Howth Martello Radio Group EIOMAR

The Howth Martello Radio Group has recently been allocated the call-sign EIOMAR (Echo India Zero Mike Alpha Romeo). The significance of the MAR suffix is twofold. It represents the station's associations with the MARTello Tower and also with MARconi.

In 1905 a Marconi station was set up in the tower to carry out signal strength tests with the HMS Monarch as she made her way from Howth to Holyhead. Details of these tests can be found at http://cnds.ucd.ie/teltec/old_teltec/art1.html.

Gerry Butler, EI0CH was one of the contributors to this very fine article. Now that the new callsign has been allocated, it is hoped to air it as soon as the station equipment has been set up.

The museum is open to the public from 11 until 5 daily until the end of October, when it reverts back to weekend opening for the winter.

Pat Herbert, the enthusiastic curator, is always delighted to show visitors around. You can drive and park right outside the museum entrance by turning right into Abbey Street from the seafront at McGuirk's Golf Shop. Then take the very sharp, steep and deceptive turn at the Indigo souvenir shop about 100 metres or so up on the left-hand side.

You can also visit the museum's website at www.qsl.net/ei5em/museum.html.

de Tony EI5EM

EI2HPF

Special Event Station in Howth

Over the weekend of July 2/3rd, a special event station, EI2HPF, was operated from the Vintage Radio Museum in the Martello Tower during the Howth Peninsula Festival. The station had many contacts on VHF and HF with the emphasis on CW.

The operators were Joe EI4FV and Tony EI5EM.

The curator, Pat Herbert was delighted with the number of visitors to the museum. Pat was kept busy welcoming visitors and showing them around his Aladdin's Cave, while Joe and Tony demonstrated the station and answered questions about the hobby.

It was great to see so many experimenters among the visitors. Andy KA2VXA, who is stationed in Germany, dropped in on Saturday. Seán EI5GH helped out on both days. John EI7GJ kindly bought ice cream cones for all on Saturday before QSY-ing to NDR. Eoin EI9HZ took the trouble to stay and help with dismantling the antennas. Ben EI4IN, who was working in Howth on Sunday, took a break to stop by for an hour or so. Other EIs who dropped in were, Tom EI8BX, Andy EI4ERB and Jim EI4GZ with XYL Joanna. Thanks to one and all. It was a very enjoyable, successful and worthwhile operation.



ComReg - Can you help?

Through a recent operation, ComReg have come into possession of a couple of amateur transceivers.

They are:

- **Yaesu Model: FT-1500M** Serial No. **0G082149**
(With a flat mobile mounting bracket still attached)
- **ADI Model: AR-146** Serial No. **75D0120017**

Anyone who can shed some light on these transceivers or know where they originated, should contact Brian Whelan by email or by phone as below.

Brian Whelan

Spectrum Compliance

Commission for Communications Regulation,
Abbey Court, Irish Life Centre, Lr. Abbey Street, Dublin 1.
Telephone +353 1 804 9605 Fax +353 1 804 9671
Email brian.whelan@comreg.ie

Waterford Rally

The Waterford Rally will take place on Sunday the 16th of October 2005 in the McEniff, Ard Ri Hotel, Waterford. Doors open at 11:00 a.m. Admission is 5 Euro and there is no cover charge for children (accompanied by an adult).

Confirmed to date are Long Communications, South East Communications and Tetra (from the UK). The Tipperary Amateur Radio Group will also have a stand at the rally and there will of course be the AREN Group and the IRTS book-stand.

EI4JN and EI9FUB will attend with their fishing pole antennas and the popular Bring and Buy will be a major feature.

Special room rates are available for those attending the rally; Bed and Breakfast for 2 nights plus one dinner is 89 Euro per person sharing. B and B for one night plus 1 dinner is 55 Euro per person sharing. There is a 19 Euro for single supplement.

For more information regarding the rally, or to book a stall, contact Michael Hoban (EI5DCB) on 051-873310.

For more information about South Eastern Amateur Radio Group visit www.searg.com or email info@searg.com.

You can also contact the Secretary, Mark Wall EI7IS on 051-853806 or 087-6302026

Cork Repeater Group

The Cork Repeater Group apologises to users for the lengthy down time on both repeaters over recent months.

Both are now back in action but the 2 metre repeater on Mullaughanish is operating on low power. It is hoped to solve this problem shortly.

Both the 2 metre and 70cm repeaters are now permanently linked, i.e. if you call on one, you will be heard on both.

The callsigns have been changed on a temporary basis pending the implementation of the new callsign structure for repeaters.

The 2 metre callsign is EI2CRCR and the 70cm repeater callsign is EI7CRCR.

Pitcairn Island Abeam

By Joe Cahill EI7IO

Dave Ryan's very interesting article, "In The Wake of the Bounty", in the May/June issue of Echo Ireland, evoked some very pleasant memories of my own visit to Pitcairn many years ago.

I found it interesting to read Dave's account of the communications equipment currently in use on the island and to compare it to my experience of some fifty years ago, probably around the year 1950.

As a crewmember of R.M.S. Corinthic of the Shaw Savill Line, I was enjoying my time as the second radio officer on what was only my second ship during a brief spell with the British merchant navy.

We had left the U.K. many weeks before and had made our passage via South Africa to Fremantle on the west coast of Australia. All ports visited were a source of great wonderment to me at this stage. I recall wandering around certain areas of Capetown and being told afterwards that even the police wouldn't go there on their own. I suppose the curious residents recognised the wide-eyed innocence of an Irish country boy.

Also while in Capetown both radio officers and the technicians from shore spent many hours attempting to solve the problem of a transmitter which had a tendency to trip following certain periods of use. In fact, the problem was solved finally when we reached Fremantle, by the time-honoured method of replacement of components until the fault disappeared.

R.M.S. Corinthic displaced about 15000 tons and carried approximately 75 passengers in luxury, with the remainder of her payload made up of manufactured goods from the U.K., on the outbound trips, and consumer goods such as New Zealand lamb products on the return journeys.

Having large tonnage of manufactured goods meant longer times in port, an ideal time schedule for the passengers and of course for the radio officers, who were not allowed to transmit in port and therefore had more time off to wander ashore and explore.

The advantage of extra time was extended further later in this trip at Melbourne where we encountered a dockers strike, which gave the opportunity of earning some extra money as a load checker on board, while also managing to visit places such as the Blue Mountains.

One of the most interesting things about the Corinthic was the range of people comprising the passenger list, for example, on the trip immediately previous I became aware that the Old Vic Theatre Australian tour of 1948 was on board, consisting of Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh and Company. Another item of interest to emerge in conversation was the extraordinary differences in size of the farms down under, measured in square miles rather than acres.

The radio room of the ship became a regular port of call for one passenger. On his first visit he tentatively produced a rather large pocket watch, which he wished to check, claiming high accuracy. This was verified each day for the rest of the voyage.

The port of Sydney followed our call to Melbourne, followed in

due course by a run to Wellington on the South Island of New Zealand.

Despite the many attractions of Australia, such as endless hours on the golden beaches, high on my personal list was a call to Pitcairn, on our way from New Zealand to Panama.

As described by Dave Ryan in his article, Pitcairn Island lies halfway between the Panama Canal and New Zealand, in the South Pacific Ocean, and is known to most people as the home of the descendants of the mutineers of the ship Bounty, remembering in particular the actor Charles Laughton and his famous line in the movie "Call the men aft, Mr. Christain".

Since our ship had a scheduled visit to Pitcairn, we began to call them on a regular basis to advise our ETA and generally arrange necessary business.

Not having our radio calls acknowledged was not a serious cause for concern at this stage. Despite not having our radio signals acknowledged I recall my own sense of reliving the past as we approached the island. Being at the ships rail and waiting to see Pitcairn looming up on the horizon brought to the mind what it must have been like for the mutineers all those years ago.

They were unaware of what lay before them as regards making a landing on the island whereas we knew that we would not be coming alongside but would heave-to and wait for the island longboats to come out to us.

As our ship approached the island, it became obvious that we were expected as signs of activity could be easily seen. Once we were on station two longboats appeared very quickly and came alongside. In next to no time the islanders had set up their stalls on the deck, consisting mostly of basketry and other ornamental items.

In addition, one of the first on board was a barefoot figure asking for the radio officer. This turned out to be Andrew Young, who introduced himself as the islands radio operator and the islands administrator. I was handed a piece of paper giving his frequencies and times of watch keeping and advised that indeed he had heard our calls but was unable to answer due to transmitter problems.

We were also asked to act for Pitcairn while in range and to tell any callers on air that the island was maintaining a listening watch at those specified times. Thus, my excitement at visiting Pitcairn was greatly enhanced by my claim to have acted as standby island radio operator for several days.

Not being also a licensed amateur radio operator at that time I didn't know that Andrew Young was a licensed amateur since 1938, hence that subject was not discussed.

Certainly the islands commercial communications equipment has advanced considerably over the years. Although as an amateur I am relatively quiet on air these days I would hope at some time in the future to make contact with some of the island operators, noting from Dave Ryan's article that there is no shortage of resident amateur radio operators.

Joe Cahill, EI7IO
downwest@eircom.net

Fancy a sked on 80m using DRM?

For information about a PC based DRM (Digital Radio Mondial) receiver that can be used as an Amateur band transceiver :

<http://drm.sourceforge.net/>

You need a rig with a 12.5KHz IF connection. This can be added to many rigs.
Windows and Linux versions are available.

Download commercial licensed version program from <http://www.dxtra.com/> for US\$ 19.95 or compile it for free from source forge. The software *IS* free, but in some countries components may require a licence. "dxtra" charges as they are "official" DRM licensed. Anyone can compile the source for personal use for free. For personal use of those with no compiler download <http://pessoal.onda.com.br/tjamorim/dream.zip>

(This is legal only for personal use, i.e. may not be distributed with a commercial radio)

You may also need from <http://prdownloads.sourceforge.net/netclipboard/qt-mt230nc.dll?download>

The DReaM software can receive commercial DRM and also Rx/Tx a less well known amateur mode.

Text can be sent at the same time as voice, or the system can be used for error free file transfer or high quality SSTV.

Email mike.ei9feb@eircom.net to get these links and info on adding 12.5KHz IF or PC setup.

Michael Watterson

National 4 Metre Activity Nights

**First Tuesday
each month**

**70.2625 MHz FM
2000-2200**

Shack Picture



John Forristal EI2HW

Everybody is interested in seeing how others approach the task of shack design. Please submit a picture of your shack.

Morse Requirements Relaxed in Canada

RAC the national society for Canada have been in discussion with Industry Canada (the regulating body) and formally submitted a proposal recommending that mandatory Morse Qualification be removed.

Industry Canada has adopted elements of the proposal and removed the mandatory Morse requirement.

Effective immediately, HF operation on the bands below 30 MHz has been authorized by Industry Canada for radio amateurs who were certified with the BASIC Qualification before the 2nd of April 2002, amateurs who have been certified with both BASIC and ADVANCED Qualifications and amateurs with only the BASIC Qualification who were certified after 1st of April 2002, and who achieved a pass mark of 80% or greater;

USA, Australia and Japan have also recently announced that they also are planning dropping or relaxing the requirement.

Limerick 70cm Repeater

The new repeater has completed its testing phase and was installed on site in Co. Limerick on the 13th of July last.

Paul EI6FE, Chairman of Limerick Radio club had the first QSO with the installers on site while mobile near Shannon.

Good 70-centimetre coverage is expected in West Clare, most of Limerick and parts of East Kerry, Tipperary South Riding and North Cork.

Low power handheld access should be available in Shannon Town and Limerick city. There may be mobile or base station access in Mallow, Blarney, Tralee and Tipperary Town.

Please send reports to Mike "ei9feb at eircom dot net".

The settings are (standard RB5 operation) with CTCSS or PLTone of 103.5 Hz. The RB5 repeater is permanently linked to Limerick 2-metre repeater, which uses a 1750 Hz tone burst to open. The location of the repeater will be announced soon.

Internet Linking By Peter Homer EI3JR

Internet linking is one of the fastest growing areas of our hobby, with hundreds of linked systems and tens of thousands of hams using Internet links around the world. Internet linking has come a long way from the early experiments of the 1990's, which involved a lot of manual intervention right up to today's range of reliable, easy to use secure systems. The great thing is that all the software is free to download and use.

Over the years I have received emails from users of the VoIP (RF as well as Computer) thanking us for giving them back their hobby as they have moved to retirement homes and smaller houses and are unable to use the HF equipment because of no proper antennas that they used years ago to talk to the DX. When I receive mails like this it makes all our efforts worth while.

Receiving many emails asking advice and seeking assistance in setting up and using the Internet linking system from different parts of the world this is what prompted me to type a few words. VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) is not going to go away as some will think it will take its place with the great modes like CW SSTV RTTY PSK31 Packet and so on which can all be used with computers. This is just another extension to our great hobby.

I have been involved with VoIP for many years in the UK building and setting up GB3DX the Birmingham VHF Repeater and the England conference server with VoIP and they are the most well used systems on the internet at this time.

The good thing is that the bands will be a little less more congested as more people use the VoIP to communicate. We as amateurs have the choice to use it or leave it as I know there are some who are not interested in this type of communication yet.

For the licensed experimenter's who do not have a computer or

understand how a computer works it doesn't matter as long as they are in RF range of a internet RF Gateway they can have all the thrills of being able to talk to stations thousands of miles away with something as simple as a hand held.

In Ireland at this time there are only a few active RF Internet Link's licensed. EI2AIR is an Irish Amateur (Ham) Radio call-sign issued by ComReg and licensed to the Ballooning & Amateur Radio Club of Ireland which is located in Dunshaughlin Co Meath. The link sysop is Aidan EI5HW. The 1st year of operation ComReg have said will be a trial and all signs are that the trial is a success. Only Clubs at the moment may apply for a gateway but we hope that this will soon change.

Having come from the UK where the Internet gateways now cover the country and being actively involved in setting up and designing some of the Internet Links for amateur use I feel that ComReg are doing the correct thing regards a trial first. I'm sure that due to the stunning success in other countries there won't be much of a problem in allowing secure internet gateways in Ireland to the clubs and experimenters wishing to set up a link.

If you do have permission to set up an RF internet link and need help with setting it up drop me an email. I have designed a number of simple interfaces that can be used or check out www.ei4jr.com for more info and circuits.

Growing numbers of hams are using VoIP, or Voice Over Internet Protocol, Using their PC only or in a combination with their radios for long-distance communication spanning hundreds or thousands of miles. They're using the Internet as the relay between their base stations, handhelds and mobile transceivers

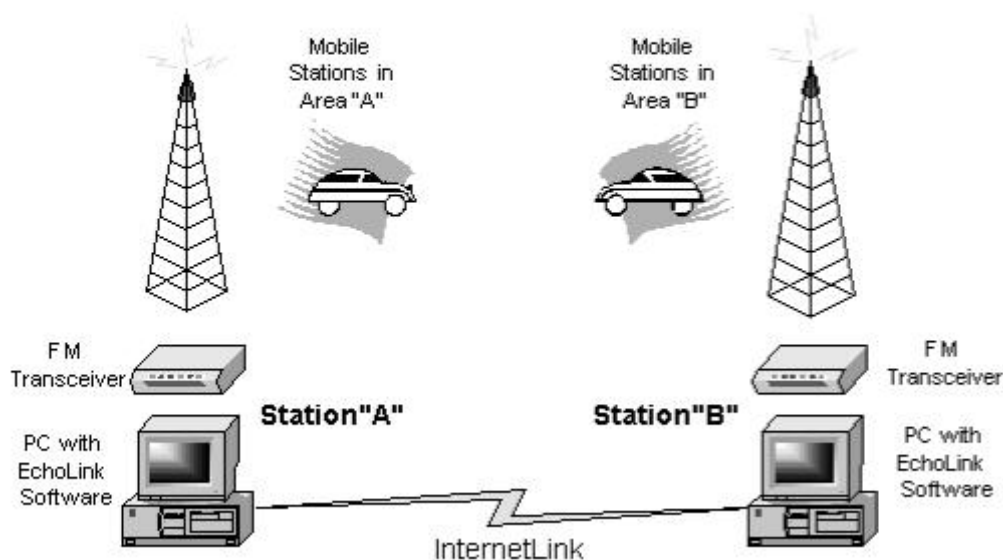
For some radio amateurs the Internet is an anathema, for others it has changed their hobby and added new dimensions to their radio interests. One such development is the 'Internet Linking'

of licensed radio amateurs using VoIP technology (Voice over Internet Protocol). VoIP is not new and has been experimented with commercially for some years. The success of commercial systems was limited by the available bandwidth and modem speeds, but with the increase in broadband technology commercial systems have become much more viable.

Radio amateurs have become increasingly interested in the technology as a way of bridging long-distance communication using a combination of the Internet and VHF or UHF transceivers.

(Continued on page 11)

Linking Example



(Continued from page 10)

Just for clarification - Internet Linking does not allow radio amateurs to access web pages via radio; rather, it acts as a conduit for voice communication over very large distances

There is a wide variety of linking systems in use. Some feature highly secure links, others feature access directly from your PC. Some systems offer DTMF control to radio users and many other features. Every system is different, and each has its following. In fact, one of the hardest things for new users of Internet linking to work out is what is fact, and what is uneducated opinion from people who have only used one or two systems, or have a strong preference for a particular secure system. (In my case EchoLink)

Internet repeater links can be made with a variety of software and hardware. However, most fall into a number of broad categories, based on the technology used to make the link:

- Custom RF only links (e.g. IRLP)
- Custom PC/RF links (e.g. EchoLink, eQSO)
- Commercial packaged systems (e.g. Yaesu WIRES series)

The VoIP software - takes the audio from the receiver which is then fed into the sound card - where it is converted into digital data. The PC then converts this digital information into digital packets each assigned with IP addresses for the destination node. These packets now flow through the internet to the destination PC where the packets are decoded then sent to the sound card and out to the transmitter microphone of the link radio which then transmits the audio out over the local repeater. The transmitter is keyed as soon as these TCP/IP (Internet Protocol) packets start to arrive. As soon as the data stops the link radio automatically un-keys and process reverses.

There are some excellent web sites that describe the technicalities of VoIP, as well as the licensing requirements, in much more detail so a little more time on one of the search engines will turn up a wealth of information.

Check with your License Issuing body in your country as you may need permission to run an RF gateway. Licensed amateurs using the PC only will be exempt and will be able to use the system after there license details have been validated by the administrators of the software you are using.

To establish a Echolink connection using RF Link

1. It is recommended that you first Listen Listen Listen and then identify your station on the Link/Repeater and that you are attempting an EchoLink operation.
2. Optionally, you can determine if the EchoLink gateway is operational by keying a "*" DTMF tone. The gateway node will respond with status information.
3. Key the four or five digit station code for the station or repeater that you wish to link to.
4. After a few seconds delay, the EchoLink node will respond with a "Connected" message if the link was successful. If the link was not successful, key a "#" to disconnect the gateway node.
5. Following a successful connection, announce your pres-

ence on the linked repeater by calling CQ, etc.

6. During a QSO using linked repeaters, let the repeater tail completely drop before transmitting to avoid any timeout problems.
7. At the end of the QSO, disconnect the link by keying a "#" DTMF tone. The EchoLink gateway will respond with confirmation that the link has been disconnected
8. There is about a 4 second delay when using the system so be patient.
9. When using RF a logbook must be kept

Accessing EchoLink From Your Computer

1. Download and install the EchoLink program from the EchoLink web site.. Check out the help files on installing the software
2. Verify that you have a microphone properly connected to your computer and the microphone input volume level is properly adjusted.
3. Connect to the internet and run the EchoLink user program. When you connect for the first time you will have to have your callsign verified all this information is in the FAQ on the EchoLink web site. You will have to email a scanned copy of your license to the administrators before they will validate you .
4. Select a station or repeater to link to from the displayed EchoLink station link.
5. Once connected and after Listening to make sure the system is not in use, use the spacebar to toggle between transmit and receive.
6. When using the PC for the contact then no log book needs to be kept.

It is suggested that you first visit EchoLink web site for the software and information on how to use the system. It is not hard to use and set up. This will enable you to chat with ease to the many thousands of licensed Radio hams from all over the world already using EchoLink. I have found EchoLink to be the best for my needs but you might find the other system better for you.

Recommended Linked Repeater Operating Procedures

1. Where repeaters are linked, your transmissions will be heard on the output of all the linked Repeaters, Gateway Links and PC Users.
2. Operation of a linked repeater is the same as a normal repeater, except that the coverage is much greater.
3. **Please remember that using the DTMF tones to move your repeater can be heard through the repeater and it can be annoying to others so keep them to a minimum also give your callsign and a brief explanation of what you are doing.**
4. **If you do move the repeater with the DTMF tones and connect to other Repeaters / Links don't forget to disconnect the repeater using the # key. entering # twice will disconnect all who is connected.**

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

5. There is about a 4 second delay when working through the internet links so don't forget to leave a good gap between overs to enable others to break in.
6. Use simplex wherever possible freeing the repeater for necessary uses.
7. Monitor the repeater (listen) or determine if the repeater is in use, and if there are any peculiarities in its operation. After listening for a few seconds, identify, un key and listen to see if it was quiet for a reason, and to allow someone to let you know if there is a reason not to continue (low audio, low signal strength, etc). Then, if all OK, proceed.
8. Don't break into a contact unless you have something to add. Interrupting is no more polite on the air than it is in person. Interruption without identification constitutes malicious (and illegal) interference.
9. Use the minimum power to key up the repeater. To make contact, simply indicate that you are on frequency . For example "EI2GYB monitoring". Do not kerchunk.
10. Remember amateur radio transmissions are being monitored by many non-hams with scanners. Watch your language and your manners. Please don't bring disrepute on the Amateur Radio Service.
11. Repeaters are intended to facilitate mobile and portable operation. During rush hours, base stations should relinquish the repeater to commuting mobiles. Some repeater owners have strict rules requiring this.
12. Keep transmissions short and thoughtful. Do not monopolize the repeater. Pause between transmissions to allow other amateurs to identify themselves if they wish to use the repeater. Pausing also allows the timer to reset, avoiding a "time-out"
13. Identify legally. In the UK that means at the beginning and end of a contact or every 15 minutes of operation.
14. Repeaters are installed and maintained at considerable expense and inconvenience. Regular users of a repeater should financially support the individual or club owner in their efforts to keep the repeater working properly.

Web Sites mentioned in the write-up

- EI4JR = www.ei4jr.com
- EI2AIR = www.ei2air.com
- EchoLink = www.echolink.org
- IRLP = www.irlp.net
- eQSO = www.eqso.net
- Wires = www.yaesu.com

Peter Homer EI4JR

Barry Bridgeman EI2IO



Every so often one comes across an inspiring story and while reading The Examiner (a national daily newspaper) on August 2nd I was intrigued to see Barry EI2IO included in a photo of three cyclists who had completed a stage of the Tour de France in the Pyrennes.

I was slightly disbelieving as my memory of Barry was of a slightly portly, heavy cigarette smoking man who had just suffered a heart attack in 1998. Barry had not been heard on the airwaves for a few years but all was explained when I rang to get the real story.

Barry freely admits that he was totally out of condition and smoking sixty cigarettes a day up to the heart attack seven years ago. He immediately gave up the cigarettes but as is common, he put on significant weight. He joined a gym but after a year he decided to buy a bicycle and get on the road, He really enjoyed using the bike and started taking it seriously, taking part in many organised events.

This year, together with two other Cork cyclists, Geraldine and Declan O'Donoghue, Barry entered the L'Etape du Tour, and organised mass participation event that allows amateur cyclists to race over the same route as a Tour de France stage. The event, 1 179 km stretch from Mourenx to Pau features the legendry Tour climbs, the Col de Marie Blanque (1.035m) and the Col d'Aubisque which at 1,709 metres is 700 metres higher than Ireland's highest mountain Carrauntoohill. Some 8,000 people started the vent and it took over 35 minutes for them all to pass the start line.

Racing in 35 degrees heat Barry completed the course in nine hours and 32 minutes. A wonderful achievement.

Barry is on the right in the top picture.

EI Results CQWW SSB 2004

MS	EI7M	8,235,051	5,862	152	61
MS	EI9E	2,544,657	2,465	103	416
All	EI4DW	672,384	946	74	235
All (Low Pwr)	EI6FE	123,032	375	41	141
All (Low Pwr)	EI7CC	76,736	297	41	135
All (Low Pwr)	EI5FQB	54,252	232	36	101
All (Low Pwr)	EI7JK	8,502	82	23	55
15m (Low Pwr)	EI2VNO	148,810	818	22	93
15m (Low Pwr)	EI9ES	6,512	101	11	33
20m (Low Pwr)	EI4CF	165,837	684	34	115
20m (Low Pwr)	EI7GY	3,861	67	9	30
40m (Low Pwr)	EI6JK	31,968	383	13	61
All Low Assisted	EI2JC	20,5560	134	21	59
Check Log received from EI4DJB					

CQWW SSB EI Records

Up to and Including 2004

	Callsign	Score	QSOs	Zones	DXCC	Year
High Power						
All	EI8IR	3,325,350	3,508	112	413	2003
10	EI3JE	692,958	2,155	34	113	2002
15	EI8GS	506,850	1,808	33	122	2002
20	EI2CN	605,914	2,080	35	107	1984
40	EI5GM	146,475	1041	20	85	2003
80	EI8IR	159,965	1,203	21	86	2002
160	X					
Low Power						
LAll	EI7GL	700,006	1,164	77	312	2000
L10	EI4DW	279,070	1,173	23	95	2000
L15	EI6FR	392,657	1,451	33	124	2000
L20	EI8IC	230,184	1,191	31	108	2001
L40	EI2CA	16,756	188	13	58	2002
L80	X					
L160	EI7IU	5,989	147	6	35	
Assisted (Packet)						
A All	EI8IR	2,977,871	3,005	123	410	2000
A 10	EI4DW	472,512	1,516	29	109	2001
A 15	EI6FR	203,312	769	27	104	1997
A 20	EI2GX	204,276	1,017	27	89	1997
A40	X					
A80	X					
A 160	X					
MS	EI7M	9,563,686	6,586	153	605	2001
MM	X					

Contest Corner **With EI4BZ**

Hello again,

Another summer gone and another contest season almost on us. I hope all involved enjoyed the IOTA Contest and we look forward to seeing claimed scores shortly.

The CQW SSB results appeared in the August issue of CQ magazine and it was nice to see eleven single operator entries and two stations in the multi single category. Congratulations to all involved especially those who do not have the best of set ups but still have a go.

No new EI records were set this time but we can look forward to the 2005 event which will be held over the last weekend in October.

Do have a look at the EI records on the left and enter a category that you feel you can improve on.

The 20m record set by EI2CN is 21 years old this year and will be difficult to beat but I'm sure somebody will try.

SSB Field day is being held in Ballinasloe again this year and at the time of writing there are five stations confirmed, two entries from the Dalkey Island Group, the Shannon Basin Club, EI7GY and EI4BZ. Hopefully a few more will turn up.

Individual operators are very welcome as there are vacancies on some stations.

Please contact EI4BZ for details.

The Shannon Basin lads are again hosting a barbeque on the Saturday night.

Other groups who plan to enter from their own localities include Cork Radio Club and the EI9E crew operating from Wexford.



Jim Carmody NN5O operating as EI2VNO in the 15m low power section from Co. Kerry in the 2004 CQWW SSB Contest.

Five Hams on the Shuttle Discovery



The Space Shuttle Discovery is home after a 14-day, 5.8 million-mile journey in space. The mission included breathtaking in-orbit manoeuvres, tests of new equipment and procedures, a first-of-its-kind space walking repair, and virtual visits with two heads of state.

Commander Eileen Collins KD5EDS and the crew of the STS-114 mission, Jim Kelly KC5ZSW, Charlie Camarda KC5ZSY, Wendy Lawrence KC5KII, Steve Robinson, Andy Thomas KD4CHF/VK5MIR and Soichi Noguchi KD5TVP of Japan, landed at Edwards Air Force Base, California., at 8:12 EDT on August 10th. Discovery's mission, the first of two Return to Flight test missions following the 2003 Columbia accident, was one of the most complex space flights in NASA history. The crew flawlessly executed its to-do list.

After an on-time lift-off from KSC on July 26, the crew tested new capabilities and techniques developed over the

past two-and-one-half years to inspect and possibly repair the Space Shuttle in orbit. Collins guided Discovery through an unprecedented back flip manoeuvre as it approached the International Space Station. The manoeuvre allowed the Station crew to snap high-resolution photos that added to the wealth of new data mission managers used to ensure Discovery was in good shape to come home.

Robinson and Noguchi, with the help of crewmates, completed three space walks. The astronauts repaired one Space Station Control Moment Gyroscope and replaced another. Their efforts put all four of the Station's gyros back into service. They also tested new repair techniques for the Space Shuttle's heat-shielding outer skin and installed equipment outside the Station.

When two thermal protection tile gap-fillers were spotted jutting out of Discovery's underside, astronauts and other experts on the ground pulled together to devise a plan to prevent the protrusions from "tripping the boundary layer," causing higher temperatures on the Shuttle during atmospheric re-entry. Ground controllers sent up plans to the Shuttle-Station complex for Robinson to ride the Station robotic arm beneath the Shuttle and, with surgical precision, pluck out the gap-fillers. Work on the Shuttle underbelly had never been tried before, but with Thomas coordinating, Lawrence and Kelly operating the robotic arms, and fellow space walker Noguchi keeping watch, Robinson delicately completed the extraction.

Discovery's astronauts and the Station crew, Russian Sergei Krikalev and American John Phillips, transferred more than 12,000 pounds of equipment and supplies to the Station. Discovery returned about 7,000 pounds of Station material back to Earth.

Over the next several weeks, engineers will process data from STS-114, the first of two test missions for the Space Shuttle. Teams are already at work looking into why a large piece of foam fell off the External Tank during ascent. NASA managers have committed to understanding why the foam came off the tank, and remedying it if necessary, before clearing the next Space Shuttle Return to Flight test mission, STS-121, for flight.



Jim EI8GS and Russell N9IV

Mayo Radio Experimenters Network

The MREN will hold theory classes from September and anyone interested in taking part should contact Brendan EI6IZ.

The Club's rally will be held in The Belmont Hotel Knock on Sunday November 20th.

The results of the Club's May/June members competition were as follows:

- 1st. John McAndrew, EI3JM;
- 2nd, John Browne, EI7FAB;
- 3rd, Mike Hayes, EI2EO;
- 4th, Jimmy Kelly, EI2GCB.

Friedrichshafen 2005

by Dave Deane EI9FBB

On June 24th to 26th, 2005, Friedrichshafen in Southern Germany became the Mecca for ham radio operators throughout the world for the 30th time. This year's event, celebrating its 30th anniversary certainly had plenty to offer, attracting over 150 exhibitors and visitors from more than 30 different countries.

Among its itinerary was an enormous flea-market with almost 10,000sq.m absolutely jam packed with everything imaginable for the ham operator, trade stands from all the major suppliers/distributors, product displays & reviews (including the amazingFTDX-9000D super-rig from Yaesu), exhibitions & seminars ranging from members meetings-ATV lectures-to presentations by the 600CW and VU4 Dxpedition teams.

Upon my arrival, the first thing I noticed (apart from the temperature of 35 deg. C) was the sheer size of the new Messe (exhibition centre), it's absolutely colossal! One would be forgiven for assuming that it is a bit extreme for a radio/electronics fair, but with approx 20,000 visitors over the weekend, this is the ideal venue. The main entrance is via the west hall, where you can see its capacity in its full glory! Over to the left, one can see; B1, B2 & B3-(the 3 giant flea-market halls) and over to the right; A1 (the main hall) containing the main trade stands & clubs/organisations can be found. Just one example to explain the size of these halls - is that various suppliers have their full range on display - one supplier even had a motorised tower (at about 30') with a full sized Opti-Beam attached!

Walking the vast aisles of trade stands, over 50% of visitors are proudly displaying their callsigns-either printed on their t-shirts, jackets or baseball hats, and it's amazing to see just how far people actually travel to come here. "DK0, HB9, SP, G & M0, 9A, I, SM" and in fact most European callsigns were in abundance.

Some of the rarer ones "SY, 4X, YI, W & K, VE, VU & JA's" were also present.

Incidentally, absolutely no "EI" callsigns were noticed. However, situated at the rear of hall "A1", a large 'QSL wall' was available, where visitors could post up their QSL card for display. The QSL card of Sean, EI2CR was noted though and thought worthy of a mention!

My "EI" callsign was noticed by several visitors (M0VOC, M0XCB, LA0HK, KG4OFO) just to name a few, and it also attracted a bit of attention at the RSGB stand. Most society stands had their native food & drink on offer, to welcome visitors & to sign their visitors books (just imagine if IRTS were there with Clonakilty black pudding and Guinness) hi hi!!!

Not too many freebies were being given out, with Yaesu even charging for a printed holdall bag containing log-book, prefix map & product catalogue. Prices, both new and used equipment, were much on par as here in EI, with little or no savings to be had. However, computers and computer accessories seemed ridiculously low, with even laptops as cheap as €50.00.

On the Saturday evening, there was a free open air concert, hosting 4 live bands, with a great attendance. Music from "The Shadows" & "Elvis" and a fantastic street band, catered for all ages, both young and not so young-hi hi, but a great night was had by all(despite the lightening and thundershowers at about 10 p.m.). It was here I noticed just how popular portable activity actually was- one guy even had an atas-120 attached to his back-pack and was operating HF!!!

I only had a basic 2m handheld with me and even most of the simplex frequencies, using 12.5kHz shift, were busy most of the time. Most activity was happening at the campsite apparently, with full HF stations in operation, and by all accounts, this is the place to stay, with separate campsites and caravan parks provided.

Two contests were organised by the DARC committee, a mobile contest and a direction finding contest, both of which seemed to be quite popular.

A bit of a late start on the Sunday morning, led me to make one last quick dash around and make a few small purchases-just in time before the Messe closed at 3 p.m., thus bringing "Ham Radio 2005" to a close.

That pretty ties up this year's event, but the only way to understand it is to actually be there and witness it for yourself.

73 to all, Dave EI9FBB.



EIs at the Friedrichshafen Rally in June.
Left to right: Aidan EI5HW. Sean EI7CV, and Gerry EI9DZ

The CQ DX Field Award

Sponsored by CQ Magazine

Rules

1. The CQ DX Field Award is issued in four categories—Mixed, CW, SSB, and Digital—for confirmed two-way contacts with 50 or more Grid Fields, based on the Maidenhead grid system.

There are 324 Grid Fields, 10-degree latitude by 20-degree longitude rectangles lettered AA through RR, covering the entire world.

Applications should be submitted on the official CQ DX Field Award application (form 2504).

Reasonable facsimiles or computer printouts are also acceptable.

2. All contacts must be two-way in the mode(s) for which the application is made. Cross-mode or one-way contacts are not valid. QSLs must be listed in alphabetical order by grid field (AA-RR). All contacts must have been made on or after **January 1, 1980**.

3. QSL cards must be verified by one of the authorized check points for the CQ DX Awards, or must be included with the application. Return postage must be included. Electronic verifications from sources approved by CQ are acceptable. See the CQ website for acceptable online sources.

4. Grid Field endorsement stickers are issued for increments of 50 additional fields, between 50 and 150, then in increments of 25 fields between 150 and 300, with a final endorsement for confirming all 324 grid fields.

A fee of \$1.00 per sticker (where stickers are issued) is charged. An SASE must be enclosed with all endorsement applications.

Stations outside the United States must include an SAE with two IRCs for airmail return.

5. Special endorsements to the basic award, as follows, are available for a fee of \$1.00 each:

(a) 28 MHz endorsement—for 50 or more grid fields confirmed on the 10-meter band.

(b) 3.5/7 MHz endorsement—for 50 or more grid fields confirmed using any combination of the 40 and 80 meter bands.

(c) 1.8 MHz endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed using the 160-meter band.

(d) 50 MHz endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed using the 6-meter band.

(e) QRPp endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed using 5 watts output or less.

(f) Mobile endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed with the applicant operating mobile.

(g) Slow Scan TV endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed using two-way SSTV.

(h) OSCAR endorsement—for 25 or more grid fields confirmed via amateur satellite.

6. Any altered or forged confirmations will result in permanent disqualification of the applicant.

7. Fair play and good sportsmanship in operating are required for all amateurs working toward CQ DX Awards. Continued use of poor ethics will result in disqualification of the applicant.

8. A fee of \$6.00 is required for CQ subscribers applying for a CQ DX Field Award certificate. The latest CQ mailing label must be attached for the subscriber discount. For non-subscribers the certificate fee is \$12.00. IRCs are acceptable in lieu of check or cash.

9. All contacts must be with land based or shipboard amateur stations working within authorized amateur bands. Contacts with aircraft are not acceptable.

10. Credit for fields activated by virtue of a DXpedition is dependent on the approval of said DXpedition for traditional CQ DX Award/ARRL DXCC credit. QSLs from mobile or shipboard stations must show grid locator or approximate latitude and longitude (sufficient to determine grid field) at time of contact. Only one grid field may be claimed for each contact. Stations located at exactly 90 degrees south latitude represent grid field AA; 90 degrees north latitude represents grid field RR.

11. For QSLs from fixed stations that do not indicate a grid field, grid locator or

station location information sufficient to determine grid field, determination of the grid field will be based on the licensed location of the station as shown in online callsign databases.

In these cases, the field may be added, in pencil only, on the address side of the card, or on the electronic confirmation printout.

If locator information is not available online or from the station contacted, the contact may not be used for credit toward this award.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to collect this information, subject to verification by the card checker and/or CQ DX Awards Manager.

12. In the event of any disputes or disagreements, decisions of the CQ DX Awards Manager shall be final.

CQ DX Grid Field Honor Roll

13. The CQ DX Grid Field Honor Roll is maintained for each of the four CQ DX Field Awards. At least 175 confirmed grid fields are required for a station to appear on the CQ DX Grid Field Honor Roll.

14. To remain listed on CQ DX Honor Roll, an operator must update his or her totals at least once per year. Updates indicating "no change" are acceptable. If confirmation of total is requested, an SASE must be included.

15. An audit sheet is available from the CQ DX Awards Manager. The audit sheet shows grid fields credited to a station. Cost is \$3.00 plus an SASE for each mode.

16. Grid field totals may be adjusted as additional input regarding specific operations is received. Acceptance may be revoked or modified with Honor Roll totals adjusted accordingly. Decisions of the CQ DX Award Manager are final.

17. All checks must be made payable to B. F. Williams.

Applications should be sent to:
Billy Williams, N4UF;
P.O. Box 9673; Jacksonville,
Florida 32208-0673.
Do not send applications to CQ.

IRTS VIDEO LIBRARY

Listed are the videos being held by the IRTS Video Library.
Please include €2.00 Euro to cover the cost of postage. Send your requests to: Jim Ryan EI3DP, 11 Knockgriffin, Midleton, Co. Cork.

Amateur Radio for beginners (RSGB)

This is an excellent video in two parts, the hobby of the space age, (22 minutes) followed by "How to become a radio Amateur". (21 minutes)

Fastnet Force 7

A record of the DXpedition to Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, (40 minutes)

Kippure

A tour of the RTE Radio/TV site at Kippure mountain (30 minutes)

Howland Island Dxpedition

Record of the HI Group 1988 trip NO1Z / KH1. (30 minutes)

The New World of Amateur Radio – ARRL

A short introduction to the hobby of Amateur Radio (30 minutes)

Amateur TV in Australia – VK5KG

An introduction to FSTV in Australia. (30 minutes)

Seven Days in Space – NASA

A week on board the American shuttle Discovery. (60 minutes)

Amateur TV – RSGB

Fastscan TV in UK also includes the VK5KG film. (120 minutes)

DATA trip to Dayton 1990

A record of the trip to America by the Dublin Amateur Travel Association (120 minutes)

IRTS Anniversary Lunch

A record of the lunch held in the Clarence Hotel Dublin to pay tribute to the founder members of the IRTS, October 1992. (60 minutes)

Dublin Texas W5IMF

A tape by W5IMF at the time of the Dublin Millennium 1988, (30 minutes)

Introduction to Ham Radio

Includes STS 9 mission and fighter aircraft, (120 minutes)

Galway Radio Club 1984

Selection of events from

1984/1985. (40 minutes)

Galway Radio Club 1985

Selection of events from 1985, Field Day, Aerial lecture and River race. (120 minutes)

Pitcairn Islands

A look at life on the islands including some of the resident amateurs. (70 minutes)

Getting started in Packet Radio. CQ Mag.

How to set up and get on air with Packet. (45 minutes)

Radio Team Finland PJ9W-1990 CQWW SSB Contest

An account of the setting up and operation of the winning multi-operator contest station by a team of Finnish operators. (45 minutes)

CQ Field Day

Setting up and operating a Field Day station for club enjoyment, training and competition American style. (25 minutes)

Getting Started in Amateur Satellites

A guide to equipment and jargon of satellite communication for the beginner. (50 minutes)

Campbell Island 1999 – ZL9CI

A record of the record breaking DXpedition to Campbell Island. Declan EI6FR was a team member. (60 mins).

WRTC 2000 in Slovenia

The 3rd World Radio Team Championships were held in Slovenia in the Summer of 2000.

Jim EI8GS and Dave EI4BZ attended from Ireland.

Kinsale Lighthouse during International Lighthouse Weekend 2001

Members of the Wicklow Wireless Society and friends activated the Old Head of Kinsale Lighthouse during the International Lighthouse Weekend in August 2001.

Some Rules for Success in contesting.

Can you add to the list?

- 1) Make your station as reliable as possible. There's no time during a contest to fix or reconfigure.
- 2) Have reasonable spares available in case something does fail, and never use equipment failure as an excuse to quit during a contest.
- 3) Make your station as simple as possible, requiring a minimum of manual operations during a contest.
- 4) Know Your Radio.
- 5) SO2R at all costs. Beg/borrow/buy a second transceiver, and make/buy filters and stubs.
- 6) Read about operations that have been successful, and consider what made them successful. Read their reports in the 3830 archives. If you can't figure it out on your own, ask them via email.
- 7) Listen to known-successful operators on-the-air when they are Practicing Their Craft.
- 8) Have your station ready and tested the day before the contest starts, and make no changes thereafter.
- 9) Be on the air for every possible contest, and between contests as well. Get as many operators familiar with your callsign as possible.
- 10) Be fresh and rested at the beginning of the contest. Bank some sleep in the hours before the contest.
- 11) Set goals before the contest, including goals for intermediate points (four hours in, 8 hours in, etc.). Keep track of how you are doing against those goals during the contest.
- 12) Keep your butt in the chair during the contest.
- 13) Unplug the telephone. Fill the dog bowls for two days use. Send the family to Disney World for the weekend.
- 14) They can't hear you if you don't transmit. CQ if you can, pounce when you must. SO2R lets you do both simultaneously.
- 15) Be as loud as you can into the target population centres.
- 16) Transmissions short. Minimum.
- 17) Make use of technology, training and common sense to *preserve your voice*.
 - A) Speak softly. Transmitters have audio amplifiers inline with the microphone. DON'T YELL!
 - B) Use a headset to keep the microphone a constant distance from your mouth and allow freedom of head and body movement.
 - C) Keep a beverage on hand, small sips often (a straw helps when wearing a headset).
 - D) Use a voice keyer for CQing.
 - E) Use a footswitch without shoes for positive transmit control. VOX is a fad for people who live in sound-proof bunkers, not for those in the Real World.
- 18) Eyes on the Prize. If you quit halfway through the contest, you've wasted half your weekend plus all the preparation and planning time. "Never give up, never surrender!"

Jeff Maass K8ND

Islands On The Air Contest 2005

EJ2MT, Bere Island Co. Cork



Front L to R: Jim EI8GS, Wilf M0WLF, Alan G3SXV, Geoff G4FKA, Neil EI3JE, Middle: Andy M1EBV, Pete G4CLA, Ger EI8HT, Billy EI7FJ, Steve G3ZVW, Donough EI 1506, Denis EI6HB, Dave EI4BZ
Back: Chris G0HFX, Matt M0MAT, Tom EI5ASB, Mannix EI5HB

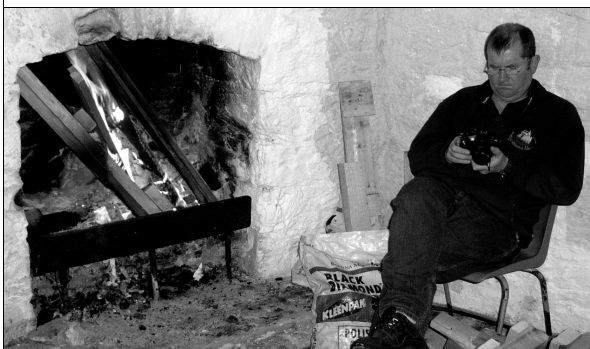
The Bere Island Group EJ2MT was formed from members of the East Cork Radio Group (EI7M), and Bristol Contest Group (G6YB) to take part in the IOTA contest in 2004 from the newly refurbished Martello Tower on the island. The group finished in 4th place in the multi-op section and the operation was repeated for this years contest.

There were some personnel changes and eight members of the Bristol club made the trip to join up with the locals at Middleton for the journey (100 miles) to Bere Island. Billy EI7FJ travelled with his mobile tower from Wexford and Tom EI5ASB from New Ross was at his first IOTA contest. Other welcome newcomers were Denis EI6HB and his son Donough EI 1560.

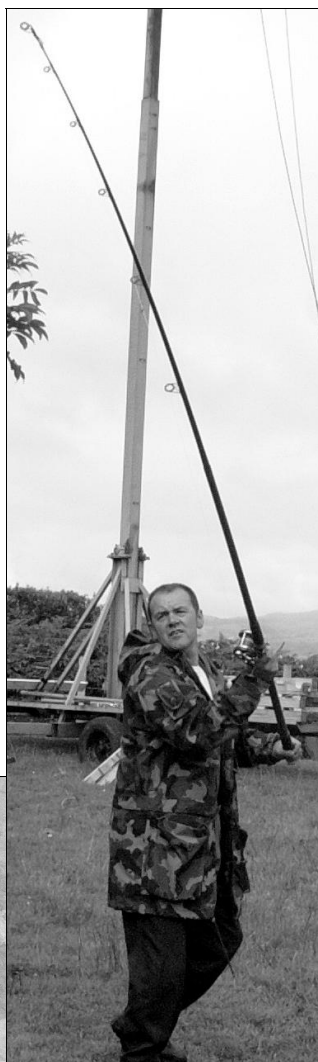
The group again booked the Admirals House Hostel for the week and were again very well looked after at reasonable cost.

The station was located in the Martello Tower, located on a hilltop with excellent takeoff over water in nearly all directions.

The score is well up on last years effort but conditions were also much better so there will be an anxious wait to see how the other big stations fared.



Ger EI8HT enjoying the open fire in the Tower



Billy McLoughlin EI7FJ using his fishing skills to get a line in the air

EJ0GI

Inisheer, Aran Islands

South Dublin Radio Club members and friends returned again this year to Inisheer Island and competed in the high power section of the IOTA contest.

Scores are rumoured to be well up on last year and the outing was very successful. Detailed information is not to hand as we go to press.

EI Activity in IOTA

EI activity in the IOTA contest seemed up to the usual level with serious efforts being made by EI0W from the shack of EI9IB in Co. Kildare, EI6DX in Dun Laoghaire and by Enda EI2II in Loughrea.

We will have to wait for the list of logs submitted to see how many were really on and we await with interest to see who was the top single operator in EI for the IRTS DX Trophy.



Jim EI8GS and Denis EI6HB operating at EJ2MT on Bere Island.



EJ4F

Arranmore Island, Donegal

EJ4F was aired from Arranmore Island, Co. Donegal in this year's IOTA Contest. Sean EI4GK was joined by Declan EI9HQ, Joe EI7GY, Paul EI5DI and Jan EI9JN/SP9JZT in activating Arranmore for the first time in any IOTA Contest.

Permission to operate from the Lighthouse on the North-western side of the island was granted by the Commissioners of Irish Lights and this proved an excellent location.

Despite less than ideal conditions, the team entered in the High Power section of the Contest and clocked up a respectable score.

This operation proved once again that in poor conditions CW is "yer only man"



Jan Gacon EI9JN



Joe Ryan EI7GY



Sean Donelan EI4GK



Paul O'Kane EI5DI



Declan Lennon EI9HQ



Tribander at the Lighthouse

Tall Ships in Waterford

From the 6th to 9th of July 2005, Waterford welcomed a fleet of 80 plus vessels to its quays for the tall ships race.

A special event station was set up and manned by Nicky EI3JB using the special call sign EI4TSR.

Despite poor band conditions, a good number of contacts were made with stations in the UK, Europe and Stateside.

2m Beacon in the Azores

A new 2 meter beacon has been installed in the Azores with the call CU8DUB/B on 144.420.

Located at 700m asl it runs 70w to a 4 element Yagi beaming 60/70 degrees. The locator of the beacon is HM49KL, a distance of about 2150km from EI.

The Azores has not been worked on 2 meters from EI

Thanks to Fred CU8AO for this information

EI5FK

ARISS News

An ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) meeting took place at the University of Surrey on the 1st and 2nd of August 2005, following the AMSAT UK 20th Colloquium.

A large portion of the meeting was devoted to the Columbus project.

The development of the L/S-band antennas was reviewed as well as possible uses.

There were presentations of Digital ATV, which is one of the possible modes to be installed on Columbus.

The next ARISS international meeting will be convened in the Autumn of 2006 at San Francisco following the AMSAT NA Convention.

The detailed report of the Surrey meeting will be posted on the ARISS international website.

The International Space Station cross-band FM voice repeater is active.

The downlink frequency is 145.800 MHz FM plus or minus 3 kHz doppler shift.

The uplink frequency is 437.800 MHz FM plus or minus 10 kHz doppler shift.

What's another country?!

By Mike McNamara EI2CL

The March/April 2005 edition of Echo Ireland was published somewhat later than usual but nonetheless it was very welcome as usual. At the same time, unusually, it had a number of thought-provoking subjects. These were:

- § The revival of the CQ DX Marathon by CQ magazine to encourage more DX working outside of contests and DXpeditions
- § Paul, EI5DI writing on what is not amateur radio
- § Frank, EI2GS has worked them all, and
- § How, as reported by Anthony, EI2HY, Swains Island did not become a "new" country.

It was also co-incidental that the June 2005 edition of the National Geographic Society (NGS) magazine arrived around the same time as Echo Ireland, and the notion of creating several new "entities" to the ARRL DXCC award program arose.

As happens from time to time, a map of Europe came with the magazine, but this map was different to what I had seen before; it showed clearly almost all of the European-Asian physical boundary line from the Arctic Ocean to Istanbul.

Despite the fact that there is no formal European-Asian border, it was most informative to see where the imaginary so-called border follows what is unlikely to change, a boundary provided by nature. One slightly disappointing aspect of the NGS map is that it does not include the border area between the Arctic Circle and the Kara Sea. It is safe nevertheless to assume that the missing bit continues to follow the Ural Mountains north to the Kara Sea.

To help feed the insatiable demand for more "new ones", armed with the NGS map and a few more with greater detail, I have come up with a case for the creation of some more DXCC "entities".

As a rule I hate inconsistencies and therefore I have to admit that my case stands or falls on why Russia, apart from Kaliningrad (UA2), provides two entities, European Russia and Asiatic Russia. I have read the DXCC rules and, apart from possible pre-WWII recognition criteria, I can find no reason to support the continental divide of Russia.

I am assuming therefore that the division is based roughly on the Ural Mountain chain which traditionally separates the continents of Europe and Asia.

I am sure there is nothing new to all of this; it is the silly season after all so I invite you to unearth that atlas so as to follow what is next.

Starting at the Arctic Ocean, at the Kara Sea, the "border" follows the Ural Mountains south as far as the city of Magnitogorsk, on the Ural River. At that point it follows the Ural River and the Ural Mountains south to near Orsk, some 20 kilometres north of the border with Kazakhstan. Then, still following the Ural River, it turns west towards Novotroitsk, Orenburg and finally, Ilek, on the border with Kazakhstan.

It should be expected that anomalies will arise when comparing the administrative borders of western Siberia with the natural border shown on the NGS map.

Significant areas of RA9, UA9, (Asiatic Russia), such as Bashkortostan Republic, Permskaya oblast, and that part of Orenburgskaya oblast north of the Ural River, are on the "European" side.

On the other hand, the area of Orenburgskaya oblast south of the Ural River is on the "Asian" side!

Incidentally, when researching this article, I discovered that Orenburg, capital of Orenburgskaya oblast in present day Russia, was capital of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on its formation on 26 August 1920, until February 1925 when the capital of the restructured and renamed Kazakh ASSR was transferred 1,200 km south-east to Kzyl-Orda.

So then, so far, so what? As indicated earlier, the westernmost Russian town on the border with Kazakhstan, near the confluence of the Ilek River and the Ural River, is Ilek. From there, travelling west into Kazakhstan, the Ural River turns south and passes the city of Oral (Ural'sk on older maps), and after some 400 kilometres enters the Caspian Sea south of the town of Atyrau.

At that stage, the Ural River has crossed Kazakhstan from north to south to drain into the Caspian Sea; the NGS map shows clearly that the area west of the Ural River is in Europe.

Having divided Russia into "European Russia" and "Asiatic Russia" because there is a "natural" border between the two, I would argue that Kazakhstan, all of which is regarded generally to be in Asia, should be similarly divided by the continuation of the same "natural" border.

Having followed the Ural River across Kazakhstan, the border continues south for some 500 kilometres to the middle of the Caspian Sea. It then curves west and just north of Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, resumes a European and Asiatic divide of Azerbaijan provided by the Caucasus Mountains. As a rough guide, Baku and the area south of the Caucasus Mountains are on the Asian side.

Proceeding west into the Republic of Georgia, the position gets a bit complicated. Some areas of northern Georgia straddle the Caucasus Mountains and therefore it can be argued that there is also a European and Asiatic divide of Georgia. But the Ossetian ethnic minority in Russia and Georgia would say that theirs is a divided country.

From 1936, when the Transcaucasian SFSR was dissolved, the present day Republic of North Ossetia-Alania had been an autonomous republic within the USSR.

In 1991, when the USSR broke apart, it became an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. On the other hand South Ossetia since 1922 had been part of the former Georgian SSR and remained within the Republic of Georgia after the collapse of the USSR. Although the political position in North Ossetia-Alania (Russia) has been relatively stable since then, the position in South Ossetia (Georgia) has been very different.

In 1990 South Ossetia declared itself a sovereign republic and expressed its desire to be joined with the Republic of North Ossetia, in the Russian Federation. This action was opposed by both Russian and Georgian governments, and in response, the Georgian Supreme Soviet abolished the region as an administrative entity. Today, despite the action of the Georgian government to regain control over the area, South Ossetia is *de facto* independent but its independence is not recognised internationally.

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

Another DXCC entity in the making?
Most unlikely!

Passing further westward, the continental divide meets a second *de facto* independent Georgian “trouble spot” – Abkhazia. Unfortunately my maps are not detailed enough to show how much of Abkhazia straddles the mountainous divide but for different reasons there is also a remote possibility of Abkhazia becoming a new DXCC country at some stage.

When the Transcaucasian SFSR was dissolved in 1936, Abkhazia was designated the Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Georgian SSR. In 1978 Abkhazians petitioned Moscow to allow Abkhazia to secede from the Georgian SSR and join the Russian SFSR, but the Soviet government refused. Some years later in 1990, although the Abkhazian Supreme Soviet (legislature) voted to declare independence from Georgia, Georgian deputies in the Abkhazian legislature reversed the declaration.

Interethnic unrest escalated into a violent armed conflict in 1992 when the Georgian government dispatched troops to the secessionist republic. In September 1993 Abkhazian forces captured Sokhumi, the capital, drove out most of the Georgian forces, and declared the republic liberated. An estimated 7,000 people died in the conflict before a cease-fire agreement was reached in May 1994 under Russian auspices. A peacekeeping force of 2,500 troops of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was sent to patrol the borders of the region.

In November 1994 the Abkhazian legislature declared the republic sovereign and elected a new president.

In 1996 CIS leaders agreed to impose economic sanctions against Abkhazia until it willingly returned to Georgia. Today, as with South Ossetia, the Georgian government refuses Abkhazian demands for independence. Nevertheless Abkhazia is *de facto* independent but its independence is not recognised internationally.

Another DXCC entity in the making?
Most unlikely!

At this second-last stage of the journey across the NGS map I was a bit surprised to see that the continental border on exiting Georgia (Abkhazia) stays within Russia. But the political frontier between Georgia and Russia must not be confused with the natural border of the Caucasus

Mountains. Therefore, on entering Russia, the European-Asian division continues inland between the last stretch of the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea coastline until just north of Anapa.

As far as I am aware there are resident radio amateurs in the towns and cities of Sochi, Tuapse, Gelendzhik, Novorossiysk and Anapa.

I wonder if they realise that the narrow strip of coastline where they reside could be a second “Asiatic Russia”.

At the final stage of the divide, just north of Anapa the line takes an elongated “S” shape across the Black Sea as far as the Bosphorus Strait and Istanbul.

I would ask you to remember back to your school days and when you first heard of Turkey-in-Europe and Turkey-in-Asia. When you were very pleased to have worked your first Istanbul station, did you also wonder whether the operator was in Europe or in Asia? When ticking off the countries-worked list, were you puzzled a bit when you discovered that you did not have to look for the “other” Turkey?

Surely this is a case for Turkey-in-Europe and Turkey-in-Asia. The mind boggles.

So far, so then, so what?

“There are no more islands” was the main feature of a pictorial QSL card noticed a few years ago but, somehow, the “IOTA-NEW” caption keeps coming.

Some group shifted the goalposts without telling anyone and suddenly there was no point in chasing Swains Island for a DXCC “new one”.

To be frank, I put much of the blame for the fall-off in DX working on Honour Rolls and the Internet.

When DXCC was in its infancy, before most of us were born, working 100 countries was a very difficult achievement for anyone. But there have been many significant changes since then. Even before I got my license in 1973, DXCC had become a relatively easy goal and, in contest conditions, was feasible over a few days.

Yes, at this stage I still like searching for a new country or island, but I like to work islands that have names, not numbers. I see little point in getting to the top of the numbers mountain to find a plateau, a crowd already there with nowhere to go, and many more on the way.

The mind boggles.

So what, so far, so then?

Initially I tended to agree fully with Paul,

EI5DI, on the use of computers in amateur radio communications, but if the entire path between stations is not via RF, where does operating via any of the radio satellites fit in?

If Paul were to ask 100 different amateurs the same question I’m sure he would probably get 100 very different responses. There is no doubt that computers, with or without internet access, provide enormous benefits for the active radio amateur every day, but there are some down-sides.

With logs available on-line by some short duration DXpeditions, the need for insurance contacts can be avoided and the pirate deprived of his pleasure.

Consider the benefits of LOTW and computerised logging. Better still, requests for QSL cards can be accepted by e-mail.

But I do not like having to use the DX cluster hoping to establish the call-sign of that slick operator on 14MHz CW who has worked umpteen stations in the last 5 minutes and did not give his call to anyone.

I do not like communicating with someone who has to use a decoder to read my 12 wpm transmission and calls it a 2 x CW contact.

Carefully prowling the bands and pouncing on the DX appears to be a dying mode because so many are waiting for the DX cluster to produce the goods.

Is that the dead-band syndrome in action? – Most certainly! Sun spot numbers and sudden giant solar flares are not behind the apparent blackout across the bands as soon as the contest has finished.

As for attracting attention, nowadays the poor soul calling CQ from nowhere unusual and using his “normal” call-sign has not much chance of getting a reply. Unless he is operating beside a lighthouse in the grounds of a castle on an island that is not in a lake or river, he will quickly feel he is wasting his time. He might have to resort to what seems to be the worst possible abuse of the DX cluster, self spotting.

On the other hand, I am sure that I am not the only one to wonder at the abuse of the cluster to complain about what can be heard these days around 14195 KHz.

I know they are a minority but why do so many guys spend their time cluttering the cluster and trying to clear that frequency? Instead, they could be calling CQ somewhere else, answering QSL cards, selling tennis balls on eBay, trying sudoku, mowing the lawn, learning Kazakh or, as

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

a last resort, talking to the XYL.

That is amateur radio in 2005?

And we think youngsters will abandon computer games and the telly in favour of amateur radio! The mind boggles?

Before I finish, - a little information about the pictures.

Pic #1 was taken by me in May 2002. It shows a pro-USSR group from Abkhazia commemorating Victory Day in Moscow. The flags are those of Abkhazia and the former USSR. The building in the background is the infamous Lubyanka (former prison and KGB HQ).

Pic #2 was taken in June 2004. It shows a cannon gun that is fired from time to time to cause avalanches. The person sitting on the cannon is my daughter Siobhán. The location is a mountain slope south of Vladikavkaz, capital of North Ossetia, very close to the frontier with Georgia. Pic #3 shows a qsl card from the R9SRR special event operation near Chelyabinsk, (Asiatic) Russia in September 2004.

Pic #4 was to show a QSL from 1A0KM but I can't find it!!! The 28SSB contact on 26 December, 1980 was during the first ever activity (as far as I am aware) from SMOM; there was no pile-up because at the time SMOM was not a DXCC country. Enough said.

In concluding this lot of rambling mid-summer fantasy, I hope I have given some useful reaction to the thought-provoking subjects listed at the beginning.

I am not against DXCC, IOTA or any other award or league tables. I refuse to send hard earned QSL cards abroad for checking by someone I do not know, to pay for their return as well as the award, and then to wait and wonder when or if I will ever get them back.

I am against poor operating practice, trading insults, self-appointed policemen and attention seekers.

I prefer simple award rules, a level playing field and goalposts that don't move when the going gets tough.

So, having got that load off my mind, if anyone knows why European Russia and Asiatic Russia came to be in the ARRL DXCC countries list, I shall be very glad to hear from them.

And while they are at it, what is the position with the Maldive Islands archipelago?

According to the DXCC list 8Q-land is in Asia and Africa.

CQ anyone, anywhere, please.

Congratulations Dave EI9FBB and Pat EI2GHB



Dave EI9FBB

The two newest members of the Cork Radio Club committee, (both were elected at the last AGM) have a genuine excuse for missing the upcoming SSB Field Day.

They are both getting married and will be away on their honeymoons on the first weekend in September.



Pat EI2GHB

Contest Calendar

September 2005

3/4th	1300-1300	IRTS SSB Field Day	SSB
3/4th	0000-2400	All Asian DX Contest	SSB
10/11th	0000-2359	Worked All Europe DX Contest	SSB
17/18th	1200-1200	Scandinavian Activity Contest	CW
24/25th	0000-2400	CQ Worldwide DX Contest	RTTY
24/25th	1200-1200	Scandinavian Activity Contest	SSB

October 2005

1/2nd	0800-0800	Oceania DX Contest	SSB
1st	1500-1859	EU Autumn Sprint	SSB
2nd	0700-1900	RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest	SSB
8/9th	0800-0800	Oceania DX Contest	CW
8th	1500-1859	EU Autumn Sprint	CW
15/16th	1500-1459	Worked All Germany Contest	CW/SSB
16th	0700-1900	RSGB 21/28 MHz Contest	CW
29/30th	0000-2359	CQ Worldwide DX Contest	SSB
29/30th	0001-2359	10-10 Int. Fall Contest	CW/DIGI

November 2005

5/6th	1200-1200	Ukrainian DX Contest	CW/SSB/RTTY
12/13th	0000-2359	Worked All Europe DX Contest	RTTY
12/13th	0700-1300	Japan International DX Contest	SSB
12/13th	1200-1200	OK/OM DX Contest	CW
19/20th	1200-1200	LZ DX Contest	CW/SSB
19/20th	1600-0700	All Austrian DX Contest 160m	CW
19/20th	2100-0100	RSGB 1.8 MHz Contest	CW
26/27th	0000-2359	CW Worldwide DX Contest	CW

December 2005

2/4th	2200-1600	ARRL 160m Contest	CW
10/11th	0000-2400	ARRL 10m Contest	CW/SSB
17th	0000-2400	OK DX RTTY Contest	RTTY
17th	0000-2359	RAC Canada Winter Contest	CW/SSB
17th	2100-2300	Russian 160m Contest	CW/SSB
17/18th	1400-1400	Croatian Contest	CW
17/18th	1500-1500	Stew Perry Top Band Distance Challenge	CW
17/18th	1600-1600	International Naval Contest	CW/SSB

For details of smaller contests and links to contest rules and results try the following:

WA7BNM Contest Calendar <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/>

SM3CER Contest Service <http://www.sk3bg.se/contest/>



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Shannon Basin CW Field Day Team



Fergus EI6IB, John EI8DL, Declan EI9HQ (visitor), Noel EI6HW, Mickey EI5EAB, Pat EI9HX. and Niall EI4CF.

Missing from photo is Brian EI8IU, Tony EI3HA and Fr Alan EI3CG who took this picture.

CW Field Day was held over the June bank holiday weekend and the Shannon Basin Group operated from Garbally College in Ballinasloe.

It was their first outing in their refurbished and modified club caravan.

This group were the winners of the restricted section of both the CW and SSB field days in 2004 and are hopeful of a repeat performance this year.

Mayo Rally

The Mayo Radio Experimenters Network Rally be held on Sunday November the 20th at the usual venue, the Belmont Hotel, Knock. Doors open at 11:00 a.m.

Bookings for accommodation should be made directly with the hotel.

The rate is €50.00 per person with a special all-in rate of €70.00 for Bed & Breakfast and evening meal.

Traders should contact Padraic Baynes EI9JA for exhibition space.

South Dublin Radio Club New Callsigns

Following success in the recent theory examination, Jim Armstrong, who had passed the Morse test some months ago, has been issued with the call sign EI8JR.

Meanwhile Shay Ryan EI6FMB has now completed the Morse test and as a result has been issued with the new call, EI7JR.

Congratulations to both.

EI7GY



Reading the Mail

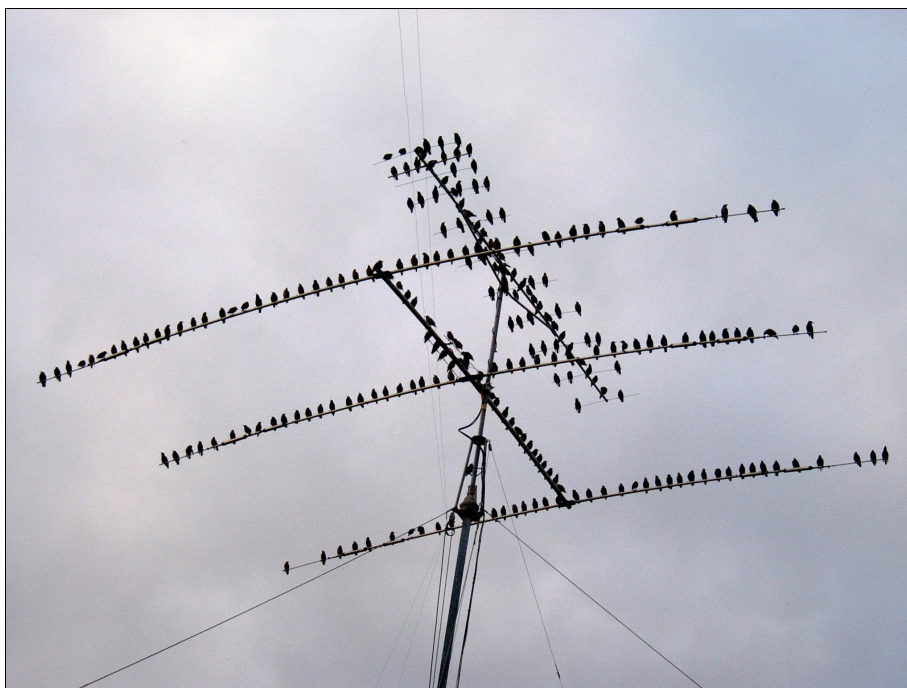
Welcome to compilation #37 of "Reading the Mail" – an account of IRTS incoming QSL Bureau activity from 17 June to 29 July 2005. In keeping with the usual summer-time doldrums, there is not much to report but, for the record, small packets (less than 1 kg) came from EDR, KARC, RA9X, SARTS, TARC, USKA, VK3 and YO5. Heavier lots came from PZK, SRR and USKA, (2kg each).

Cards from the following were thought worthy of mention: HB0TW, HE2CC, HF4IARU, HF70I, HV5PUL, R400T, TA0B, YI9KT, Z2/VK3DXI, 1A0KM, 5H3/IK2GZU, and 9U6PM.

For IOTA chasers there was: A35RX, HF0POL, JW0HU, RI9K, RI0IMA, S79MH, TC80KOC, ZK1EAA, 3B6RF.

Congratulations to all recipients. Until my next report, all best wishes and lots of good DX in the meantime.

Michael McNamara, Ei2CL



Help wanted.

Birds can be a big problem when they decide to adopt a HF Yagi as a meeting place. Their presence in itself is not a problem but their tendency to empty their bowels on take off can make a desperate mess.

Clothes lines in the vicinity are a no go.

Has anyone any experience of finding a solution to this problem?

Experts consulted have made suggestions ranging from hanging dead birds off the aerials to keeping a pet falcon on site. Apparently dummy owls or hawks have only a very short-term effect. The picture above was taken on August 6th 2005.

Thoughts to the Editor please.

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Manorhamilton Co.Leitrim

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M2 50 MHz 5 element Beam on 18 foot boom. €200.00
Eddie EI5FFB on 086-8224992

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Phone Declan EI9HQ at 01-2848458 (evenings) or email ei9hq@utvinternet.com

Outgoing QSL Bureau

Please mail your cards directly to the Outgoing Bureau Manager

Anthony Baldwin EI8JK,
Rathlin,
Kilcrohane,
Co. Cork.
ei8jk@amsat.org

Your Letters

Internet and Amateur Radio

Dear Editor,

Aidan EI5HW, in his letter to Echo Ireland, takes exception to what he terms my negative take on "Amateur Radio VOIP technology". Does he not realise this is a contradiction in itself – just as if I were to refer to a "powered hot-air balloon"?

There is a long tradition, more than 200 years, of hot-air balloon flight. The craft is at the mercy of the wind and the skill of the pilot, who has vertical control, but little or no lateral control other than by seeking winds from different directions at different heights.

Why, in this day and age, would anyone bother with such a primitive flying machine, especially as it requires a chase crew to pack it all up and bring it home overland after each flight?

The answer is simple. People go flying in hot-air balloons for its own sake – to enjoy the experience and to improve their flying techniques. They happily accept the restrictions, and get on with it. Of course, there's always the option of using a bit of technology (technology is good, isn't it?) to add an engine, a propeller, and maybe a wing or two. But that would turn it into a dirigible or an airship, or something else! We don't need to know exactly what it would be called, because we know for certain what it would not be – a hot-air balloon. By introducing inappropriate technology we destroy the very thing we were trying to "improve". That's fact, not opinion! Getting home might be a bit easier – but that's not the point.

Amateur radio also has a long tradition, and now, in common with hot-air ballooning, it's a legacy interest. No one pretends either is, respectively, at the cutting edge of communications or flying – that's simply not a requirement of the interest or hobby. In each case, there's virtually no limit to what enthusiasts might spend on accessories to make the experience more enjoyable, or challenging, or whatever. The key word, however, is "accessory". An engine is not a valid accessory for a hot-air balloon. Neither is the internet a valid accessory for amateur radio when used as a substitute for RF propagation.

By definition, radio amateurs use radio (RF) for communication. If the entire path between stations is not RF then, whatever you choose to call it, it's not amateur radio. If Aidan or anyone else has difficulty accepting this, then please let me know why.

I respect his achievements with flying hot-air balloons, and I acknowledge the work needed to set up Echolink gateways – I couldn't do either myself. I can understand some of the technical challenges because I work with computers and use the internet every day, but I cannot understand why anyone would do it and then claim that Echolink is just another amateur radio "mode". It's not – it's a different technology and no more a mode than phone-patch, one of its predecessors.

Why, if it's appropriate to link amateur radio with the internet, is it not also appropriate to link amateur radio with other third-party networks such as the public switched telephone network or the mobile phone network (isn't that a better option because it's wireless?).

Aidan attempts to add weight to his arguments by saying his Echolink gateway is licensed by Comreg. I don't attach any particular significance to that. As I've already claimed, amateur radio is a legacy hobby, and we all know that ComReg is often unsure how to deal with it.

As for QST printing a colour article about Aidan's experiments, I'm happy to congratulate him on his flying achievements and the good publicity he has generated for Ireland. Nevertheless, in amateur radio terms, the only merit in his description of communicating from the balloon is a line-of sight link to the home QTH.

I believe the article does a dis-service to amateur radio and it shows the ARRL is confused about what is, or is not, a legitimate amateur radio pursuit.

I have been consistent in my views about amateur radio and the internet since I set up my website in 1995, and the fact that I am an IRTS committee member has no particular relevance. I have expressed these views to the Society, to ComReg, and to the IARU. At the 1996 IARU conference in Tel Aviv, IRTS was one of only two national societies to vote against a motion promoting the integration of amateur radio and the internet. It was clear to me, even then, that this so-called "integration" was inappropriate and might well lead to amateur radio being swamped by the internet.

The issue raised in my last letter remains – is the IRTS an amateur radio society or is it becoming something else?

Here's an example of the present ambiguity.

I happen to be the incoming-QSL sub-manager for the "5" series of callsigns. The other day I forwarded a card to Aidan with the mode shown as "Echolink". To call this practice the height of absurdity is somewhat of an understatement. In the context of amateur radio it has even less merit than QSLing repeater QSOs.

Echolink is another technology, with the internet as its foundations, and is not an amateur-radio mode. Amateur radio can function without the internet, Echolink cannot.

Perhaps now we can look forward to QSLs for "QSOs" on Skype, or APRS, or mobile phones – it would make just as much sense.

73,
Paul EI5DI

Thanks from GD

Hi Dave,

Just a short note to congratulate and thank you and all concerned for a really excellent April May 'Echo Ireland'.

It is great to learn of just how much is going on in Amateur Radio in EI.

As an Irish exile in GD, the journal, along with the Sunday radio news, keeps me in touch with what's going on in EI in the radio scene.

It is much appreciated,

Best 73
Ted, GD4HOX/EI3ED



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